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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 25, 2008. Claims 1 and 14-23 were pending, with claims 2-13 having previously been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, claims 1, 16 and 22 have been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter, and new claim 24 has been added. Accordingly, claims 1 and 14-24 are now pending and presented for reconsideration, with claims 1, 16 and 22 being in independent form.

Claim 1 was objected to as having informalities.

In response, the claim has been amended to address the formal issues indicated in the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 14 and 15 of the present application are now allowable.

Claims 16-19, 22 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Maki et al. (US 2002/0126193 A1) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,097,408 to Fukushima et al. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Maki in view of Fukushima and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,909,872 to Eskey, and Kashiwagi et al. (US 2001/0028381 A1). Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Maki in view of Fukushima and further in view of Kashiwagi.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is allowable over the cited art, for at least the reason that the cited art, as acknowledged in the Office Action, does not disclose or suggest the aspects of independent claims 16 and 22 of the present application of (a) a charging unit provided in a conveyance belt wound around at least two rollers, configured to receive a first AC bias voltage and apply a charge based on the *first AC bias voltage* to a surface

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of the conveyance belt, and (b) an AC bias supplying unit configured to supply the first and second AC bias voltage at selected timings.

Applicant submits that the cited art, even when considered along with common sense and common knowledge to one skilled in the art, does *NOT* render unpatentable such aspects of independent claims 16 and 22 of the present application.

In view of the remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that are required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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